DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 136 SP 039 651

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TITLE A Three-State Study of Female Superintendents.
PUB DATE 2000-10-27
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, October 27, 2000).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Females; *Gender Issues; *Sex Discrimination; *Women Administrators
IDENTIFIERS Illinois; Indiana; Texas

ABSTRACT

This study investigated female school superintendents' perceptions about forms of discrimination they faced; help they received from professional organizations, university programs, or informal networks; the superintendency as a male field; the effect of superintendency on family life; and barriers to the superintendency for women. Surveys indicated that half of the respondents had been assistant or associate superintendents, and the rest had been K-12 principals. Most respondents felt that male and female board members were equally supportive. Respondents did not feel restricted in the size of school districts within which they could work. About 62 percent said that their professional organizations provided workshops for aspiring superintendents. Respondents tended to believe that the superintendency was not a man's territory. Most did not feel that power meant dominance for men and collaboration for women. About three-quarters did not feel restricted by their family situations in applying for superintendent jobs. Half believed that women with families put them before their careers. Barriers to superintendency included lack of: professional networks, encouragement, formal and informal training, membership in the good old boys' network, and influential sponsors. Most respondents said they would seek the superintendency again. (Contains 25 references.) (SM)

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A Three-State Study of Female Superintendents

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Presented at the Annual Meeting

Mid-Western Educational Research Association

Chicago, October 27, 2000

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A Three-State Study of Female Superintendents

INTRODUCTION

Women Superintendents: Why so Few?

The most powerful position in public schools is that of school superintendent, and it is a position dominated by men. Of the 13,728 school superintendents in the United States, 11,744 are men and 1,984 are women (Glass, 2000). The U. S. Census Bureau has characterized the superintendency as "... the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States" (Björk, 2000, p. 8). Lucas thinks the situation may be changing. "Interest in women gaining access to top administrator posts is increasing as many current superintendents are retiring and more women are seeking the top job in school districts" (Lucas, 1999).

Historically, women have made up a majority of the workforce in education. "In studying the history of women in the superintendency, Blount found that in 1910, approximately 9% of the school superintendents were women and this increased to 11% in 1930" (cited in Björk, 2000). Shakeshaft refers to this period as "a golden age for women in school administration" (Shakeshaft, 1989, p.34). Women had won the right to vote in 1920, and feminist groups were promoting equality for women. However, "Like their teacher counterparts, women administrators sometimes attained their positions by default either because no men were available or because women were a bargain as they were paid less than men" (Shakeshaft, 1989, p.38). Women in the superintendency had declined to nine percent by 1950 and sunk to a low of 1.3% in 1971 (Björk, 2000). The percentage of women superintendents remained in a range less than 10% until the 1990s (Björk, 2000, p.8) when it doubled from 6.6% to 13.2% (Glass, 2000). Lucas points to the fact that the number of women in the superintendency "remains...no larger a proportion than at the turn of the 20th century" (Lucas, 1999).

Several factors account for the decline of women in the superintendency. After World War II, men returning from military service were able to go to school with the assistance of the Service Men's Readjustment Act, commonly known as the G.I. Bill of

Rights. Shakeshaft (1989) stated "...Men were encouraged to become teachers and administrators, women were encouraged to remain at home" (p. 46). The consolidation movement caused schools to become larger, and administration became more complex. "The 1950s and 1960s witnessed a revival of the prejudices against women that had hindered their advancement into administration from the colonial period onward" (Shakeshaft, 1989, p.48). These prejudices included the perception that women could not manage a large school, much less a school district.

Various models have been offered to explain the low numbers of women in the superintendency. One group of perspectives is offered from the psychological point of view. Estler (1975) coined the "meritocracy model" (p.370), Schmuck (1980) offered the "individual perspective" model (p. 242), Hanscot and Tyack (cited in Shakeshaft, 1989) refer to a set of concepts labeled as "internal barriers"(p. 82), and Ortiz and Marshall, (1988) offered "the person centered explanations" approach. The common thread in all of these models is to provide a psychological framework for explaining the persisting gender segregation in the superintendency. According to Estler's model, "the most competent people are promoted according to their ability" (p. 370). In Schmuck's model, the focus is person centered, and individuals are "held responsible for their own problems." Obviously, women must deal with their own problems in this model, and the "defect or weakness in the individual" (p. 9) must be remediated. Shakeshaft described this approach as a "blame the victim" perspective (1989, p.82).

A second set of perspectives can be conceptualized around the notion of the effect of limited opportunities for women. Again, Schmuck addressed this as an "organizational perspective" (p. 244), while Estler (1975, p. 370) referred to it as a "discrimination model." The focus of these perspectives is on the educational system itself, not the individual. The shift is from internal to external obstacles. Hanscot and Tyack (1881) explained, "Women behave in self-limiting ways not because they were socialized as females but because they are locked into low-power, low-visibility, dead-end jobs" (p. 7). According to this perspective, there are structural and systemic barriers that work against the advancement of all candidates who are not White males.

A third approach emphasizes, not the individual nor the educational system, but society as a whole. Estler refers to this as the "women's place model" (p. 368), Schmuck

called it "the social perspective" (p.243), and Shakeshaft (1989) referred to it as the "social structure of society...the root cause of inequities" (p. 83). Discrimination exists as a reflection of societal role expectations. This social dynamic is reflected in how boys and girls are socialized into our culture. According to this view, the lack of female role models in positions of authority serve to inculcate young people into viewing gender differences as 100% normal. Obviously, the different approaches or perspectives reflect a deep-seated and broad-based problem that must be understood at its very core if appropriate remedies are to be applied.

Over the past 25 years, legislative responses to gender equity concerns seem to have affected women's aspirations far more than they have influenced the employment practices of educational institutions (Regan & Brooks, 1995). There has been a significant increase in the number of women who are preparing for careers in educational administration, and while gender equity legislation and affirmative action policies have been enacted, women continue to be underrepresented in administrative positions in schools. Women constitute more than half of the doctoral students in educational administration, yet they occupy about one-fourth of the administrative positions in the field. Another consideration is that only ten percent of the women in doctoral programs are choosing to earn the superintendent certificate along with their specialist or doctoral degree (Glass, 2000; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Logan, 1999)

Traditionally, administrators have been recruited within the education profession where females are a majority. The percentage of female administrators remains relatively low (Tabin & Colemen, 1991). Approximately 75% of elementary classroom teachers are women, but 75% of the current superintendents did not teach at the elementary level. Women constitute only 9 to 16% of the current high school principals; however, the position of high school principal is part of a career path that often leads to the superintendency. More women principals are hired at the elementary level than are hired as high school principals, but elementary school principals seldom move up to the position of superintendent (Logan, 1999; Sharp, 1991). Most positions that lead to the superintendency are in secondary schools or the central office.

Glass lists seven reasons why females still fall behind in top district posts: 1) women are not in career positions that normally lead to advancement; 2) women are not

preparing for the superintendency; 3) women are not as experienced nor as interested in fiscal management as men; 4) personal relationships hold women back; 5) school boards are not willing to hire women superintendents; 6) women enter the field of education for different reasons today; and, 7) women enter administration at an older age (Glass, 2000). Women tend to have experience in the central office in the area of curriculum, but they do not have the same experience in personnel or in finance. And, school boards still use experience in the management of fiscal resources as a key criterion in hiring superintendents. School board members do not perceive women superintendents as being strong managers, nor do they see women as capable of handling district finances (Logan, 2000; Glass, 2000). Women have a tendency to have a less-developed mentoring system -- a situation that is detrimental to providing in-district mobility opportunities for women aspiring to the superintendency (Glass, 2000; Ramsey, 2000).

Domestic relationships may restrain many women from pursuing higher levels of responsibility, and increased time demands may cause family problems. Ramsey (2000) reported, "...Parenting issues, more than spouse issues, may play a crucial role in shaping the female superintendency. They can dictate how much time a woman commits to her job, how conflicted she feels about her private and personal lives, when--and even if--she enters the superintendency at all." The school superintendency may be unattractive to women due to the issue of mobility, which may disrupt her family life (Ramsey, 2000; Glass, 2000).

Perhaps the most important reason there are so few women in the superintendency is that women enter the teaching profession to teach children. Women tend to spend more time in the classroom before becoming an administrator than their male counterparts. Men begin their administrative careers before the age of 30, whereas most females begin after the age of 30. Taking time to rear their children may be the main factor in this delay. Typically, the male superintendent will enter the superintendency in his early to mid 40s; the female superintendent will not enter until she is around 50 (Ramsey, 2000).

The Problem

The literature in educational administration is replete with warnings about the impending shortage of candidates to fill the expected vacancies in educational

administration. Anderson (1991) suggested there was good reason to anticipate a shortage because of the lack of numbers within the applicant pool as well as the lack of quality within the existing pool. While the number of candidates applying for positions as superintendents and principals dwindles, it is further compounded by the issues surrounding female candidates for administrative positions.

Female candidates for superintendent positions face challenges that are different from their male counterparts. As mentioned previously, women tend to remain in teaching longer than their male counterparts before trying to obtain an administrative position. Few women apply for and are hired for high school principal positions, yet it is the number one position from which one ascends to the superintendency. Boards of education tend to have more male members than female, and superintendents are hired by boards of education. Some suggest that where females are in a majority on the board of education, female superintendents tend to be hired more often. Female administrators tend to have a less defined network of colleagues upon which to seek advice and discuss professional issues. Sometimes, larger school districts tend to be headed by males for reasons that include age-old prejudices – a woman cannot be as good a manager as a man, a woman is more emotional than a man, or that a woman is more prone to cry. The truth of the matter is that women head larger districts (districts over 25,000 students) more than men -- 11% to 8%. Women also lead men in heading small rural districts (districts with 300 or less students) 28% to 14%. It is the middle group of districts containing 3,000 to 24,999 students where women are basically nonexistent in the superintendency (Burstyn & Tallerico, 1996). Thus, job placement may tend to be influenced by the location of the district.

Perceptions of a superintendent's behavioral characteristics include aggressiveness, assertiveness, and competitiveness, all of which are not perceived to be positive attributes in females (Marshall, 1986). Marriage and family augment a male's credentials, yet these very attributes tend to hinder a woman's career (Schmuck, 1975). Edson (1988) pointed to aspects of this type of discrimination occurring during job interviews. Issues such as parenting are commonly addressed with female candidates while men are rarely, if ever, questioned about such matters.

Research Questions

1. What forms of discrimination did you perceive? in the type or size of district you could apply for; in your prior experience; from a search consultant; from male/female board members?
2. Did you receive help from your professional organization, university programs, or informal networks?
3. Do you agree with statements regarding the superintendency as a "male" field? Is "power" the same for men and women; how do men/women value trust, competence, and collaboration?
4. What is your feeling about your family and the superintendency? with regard to applying for a job; having a family and a career; being mobile; getting support from your family; having a daughter or son become a superintendent?
5. What are some barriers to the superintendency for women?

METHODOLOGY

Based on the literature, a questionnaire was prepared and sent to all female superintendents in the states of Illinois, Indiana, and Texas, the states in which the researchers work. The names and addresses of these superintendents were obtained from official lists from state officials and/or state superintendent organizations in the three states. In Illinois, there were 102 female superintendents. Of those, 50 returned usable surveys for a return rate of 49.0%. In Indiana, there were 26 female superintendents, with 23 responding for a return rate of 88.5%. Texas has 84 female superintendents, and 45 returned questionnaires for a rate of 53.6%. Overall, 118 of 212 female superintendents returned the surveys for a response rate of 55.7%. The data were subjected to a frequency analysis using SPSS 10.0 for Windows at Teachers College, Ball State University. (Of the 67 total questions, 11 were not given to the Texas superintendents.)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the literature, most superintendents come to that position through an assistant superintendency and/or the high school principalship. As a result, women are often told to seek those positions if they desire to be superintendents. The women surveyed were asked to state the position that they held just before becoming a superintendent for the first time. While 53.5 % of the women in Illinois and Indiana (Texas women were not asked this question) responded that they had been assistant or associate superintendents, 19.7% stated that they had been elementary or middle school principals, with 12.7% saying that they came from the high school principalship. Those Illinois and Indiana women who had not been high school principals were asked if they felt that it was harder for them to become a superintendent since they had never held a principal's position at the high school level. In response, 85.7% said that they felt that it was not a problem for them. Further research is needed to determine if females can assume the superintendency through the elementary school more than they have been able to do in the past. Also, for those who came through the assistant superintendent path, it would be helpful to know what administrative positions – and at what level – they held prior to the assistant superintendent job. Were they principals and at what level?

One research question asked the respondents: What forms of discrimination did you perceive? in the type or size of district you could apply for; in your prior experience; from a search consultant; from male/female board members?

Men still hold the majority of school board positions. Although the total number of school board members varies from state to state (and sometimes within a state), the responses received showed a higher percentage of men than women. For example, 25.9% of the superintendents said that they had five men on their boards; 2.6% said they had five women on the board. At the other end, there were 6.9% who said they had two men on the board, while 26.7% said they had two women (and an additional 25.5% said they had one female board member).

The fact that men may outnumber women on the boards does not automatically mean that the female superintendents are discriminated against by the men on the board.

And, this was verified by the respondents from Indiana and Illinois that 9.9% of the men seemed more supportive of the superintendents, 11.3% of the female board members seemed more supportive, and 78.9% stated that the support they received was the same from both men and women board members. (Statistically, some total responses may not add to 100.0% due to rounding, even though the computer results show them adding to that total.) Also, it should be remembered that these female superintendents WERE hired by these boards which have more men than women (on average). When asked if the president or chair of the board was male or female when they were first hired, 80.3% said that this person was male. Likewise, when asked about the composition of the search committee or consultant (if used), the superintendents stated that 39.6% were men, 8.3% were women, and 43.8% included both men and women. (Also, 8.3% did not know the composition.) Since references are a part of the hiring process, the female superintendents were asked about whom they chose to be references. They stated that 98.4% of their references were male. It would be interesting to ask WHY male references were selected. Was it because most or all of their supervisors, mentors, and professors had been men, or did they feel that it would help them to have male references?

Sometimes it is said that female superintendents are hired mostly for certain size school districts or in certain locations. When asked if they felt that they were restricted in the size of the district where they could apply for a superintendency, these female superintendents felt that this was not a restriction with 75.2% saying that it was not a problem. (Their choices were Yes or No.) Also, 77.2% said that they did not feel restricted in the type of district (small town, rural, urban, elementary district) where they could apply. In looking at the actual demographics of the responding superintendents, 27.4% were working in districts of 500 or fewer students, with 21.4% working in districts with enrollments between 1,001 and 2,000, and with 27.4% serving as superintendents in districts with over 3,000 students. So, the size of the districts of those responding varied a great deal. In terms of the type of district (or location), 8.5% were superintendents in an urban area, 29.1% in a suburban area, and 62.4% reported that they worked in a rural or small town. So, while the size of the districts varied, a large majority served in rural or small towns. However, it should be pointed out that the results for men could be very

similar as there are more small town and rural areas in the United States than there are other types of locations.

While this survey certainly cannot confirm or deny any discrimination for women who were NOT hired as superintendents, the female superintendents who were surveyed did not seem to indicate discrimination by their male board members or in the type or size of school district they would consider for superintendent positions.

A second research question asked the respondents: Did you receive help from your professional organization, university programs, or informal networks? When asked if gender issues were discussed in university preparation programs, 71.3% of the superintendents stated that they had not been discussed. However, 61.8% responded that their professional superintendents' organization had provided workshops to help them as an aspiring superintendent. When asked whether some areas were serious barriers, somewhat of a barrier, or not a barrier to becoming a superintendent, 55.2% said that a lack of a professional network was somewhat of a barrier, with 12.1% saying it was a serious barrier. Also, 50.4% stated that exclusion from the "Good Old Boys" network was somewhat of a barrier, and 17.1% said it was a serious barrier. Having limited access to formal and informal training was not considered a barrier at all by 67.5% of the superintendents, but lack of influential sponsors was somewhat of a barrier (53.9%).

The third research question asked the respondents about several concepts: Do you agree with statements regarding the superintendency as a "male" field? Is "power" the same for men and women; how do men/women value trust, competence, and collaboration? The superintendents were asked some of these questions on a forced answer four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.) When asked if they agreed that the superintendency was a man's territory and that they needed to be careful about what they said, 80.3% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Since it is a fact that males dominate the field in numbers, we asked if they felt that they would just have to accept that fact. The results were about even, with 39.7% saying that they would have to accept this fact and 37.1% saying they would not have to accept it. However, 57.6% did agree that society, in general, feels that the superintendency is a

male's field. It was encouraging to find that 53.9% stated that they did not feel isolated in this male-dominated field.

The female superintendents were asked about their feelings on issues such as power, trust, competency, and collaboration. The literature sometimes states that power means dominance for men, while power means collaboration for women administrators. Our superintendents disagreed with this statement (45.2%), with an additional 9.6% strongly disagreeing. Also, 58.8% stated that they disagreed with the statement that men value trust over competence in administrative teams, and 65.7% disagreed that women value competence over trust in such teams. In a similar vein, it is sometimes said that men listen for facts, while women listen for feeling. In response, 82.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement from the literature. Another statement said that men tend to discuss administrative problems while women discuss instructional issues or students. Just over 66% of the female superintendents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this choice. A statement that is often found in the literature is that male administrators are more authoritarian in their leadership style, while female administrators tend to display a participatory leadership style. It was somewhat surprising that 56.1% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This is counter to the concept that females are more participatory than males in a leadership position – an advantage to females. On the other hand, when asked if they felt that women tend to be more collaborative than men, 67.8% agreed that they were. They also strongly rejected the idea that women might be less decisive than men in leadership positions, with 96.5% saying that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this concept. With regard to this research question, our respondents did not voice opinions which agreed with much of the literature regarding power and leadership.

Another research question was as follows: What is your feeling about your family and the superintendency? with regard to applying for a job; having a family and a career; being mobile; getting support from your family; having a daughter or son become a superintendent?

One factor that is often cited concerning female superintendents is that they may not be a mobile as males because of family situations and because of their spouse's jobs,

if they are married. When asked about this, 69.6% said that they did not feel restricted in applying for superintendent vacancies because of their spouse's position or because of children. In our survey, 77.8% of our respondents were married, 6.8% were single and had never been married, 12.8% were divorced, and 2.6% were widowed. They were asked about their family size, with 44.4% stating that they had two children, 18.8% with one, 16.2% with three, and 17.1% with no children. However, 65.5% had no school age children at the time of the survey, so children may not have been a factor in the superintendency for some of these women. (We asked them if they had school-age children, did they attend school in their district? The majority stated that their children attended a different district than where they were superintendents. This is probably different than most male superintendents.)

The superintendents were asked if they thought that women who have families put them before their careers. Responses were exactly even, with 50% saying they agreed or strongly agreed and 50% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. They did, however, feel that men were more mobile than women were in pursuing superintendencies (74.4% agreed/strongly agreed). They also felt that women may not apply for a superintendent's position because they did not want to spend too much time away from home (51.3% agree).

As can be imagined, the husbands of the married superintendents held a variety of jobs. In Indiana, the largest response was that the husbands were teachers (seven), with two husbands serving as superintendent or assistant superintendent. Two were also retired. In Illinois, six were retired, five were teachers, three were superintendents, and another three held other administrative positions in schools. In Texas, five were listed as self-employed, three were in real estate, three were ranchers, and three were retired.

Since the superintendency can be a stressful job, we asked what the women did to relieve job stress. Again, the answers were varied, but in both Indiana and Illinois, the top three activities were reading, exercise, and travel, with eating out also listed high in Illinois. This question was not asked in Texas.

Stress on the job can sometimes contribute to marital discord. When asked if this had been a problem for them, 73.4% stated that it had not, with 26.6% saying that it had been a problem.

When asked if lack of encouragement from their family, peers, or the community was a barrier to being a superintendent, 56.8% said it was somewhat of a barrier, 28.8% said it was not a barrier, and 14.4% said it was a serious barrier. Finally, the female superintendents were asked if they would encourage a daughter or a son to seek the superintendency if she or he displayed an interest in the position. The respondents replied, with 62.1% saying that they would encourage their daughter (8.6% said they would not), and 66.4% saying that they would encourage their son to be a superintendent (7.8% said they would not). (29.3% had no daughter; 25.9% had no son.) In summary, for this research question, the superintendents did not feel restricted by their family and would encourage a son or daughter to become a superintendent.

The final research question was as follows: What are some barriers to the superintendency for women? Some of the barriers have already been discussed: lack of encouragement, lack of a professional network, limited access to formal and informal training, exclusion from the "Good Old Boy Network," and lack of influential sponsors. It should be recalled that the superintendents were asked to rate some factors as a serious barrier, somewhat of a barrier, or not a barrier to women becoming superintendents. Some of the factors which were felt strongly as "not a barrier" were as follows:

negotiations with teacher unions (72.2%)

dealing with school budgets (71.8%)

lack of confidence in managerial abilities (65.8%)

reluctance to take risks (56.9%)

The only factors (not previously mentioned) with less than 50% for "not a barrier" rating were as follows:

lack of career models (35.9%, with 15.4% saying it was a serious barrier)

low teacher interest in administration (24.8%, with 23.1% saying serious)

lack of career mobility (23.9%, with 12.0% serious)

Other questions were asked which did not fit into the research questions but were based on information from the literature. Two questions dealt with the female superintendent as boss. Some females have stated in the past that it is sometimes harder

to supervise other females than males. When asked if male school employees have trouble having a female superintendent as their boss, 21.6% of the female superintendents agreed that they did. When asked if female school employees have trouble having a female superintendent as their boss, 21.7% agreed that they did – no difference.

Another question was based on the idea that females are sometimes considered weaker in school finance and facilities, which may be a reason that some boards are reluctant to hire women. When given the statement that female superintendents do not handle finance and facilities as well as male superintendents, 95.7% stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. And, in terms of overall management of a school district, the respondents felt very strongly that men would not manage better than women, with 100% having this feeling. Finally, 85.3% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that male and female superintendents are more alike than they are different. This statement is important to remember. While there are differences between male and female superintendents, their paths to the position, some of their strengths and weaknesses, and some of their support systems, there are probably many more factors – and just as important – that are the same with both men and women. Finally, when asked if they had it all to do again, would they seek the superintendency, 95.7% said that they would do it all again.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Below are some demographics which were not included in the Results section:

How many years have you been a superintendent (total in all districts)?

Range was 1-21 years; mean of 5.319 years; median of 5 years

How many total years do you have in education?

Range was 12-35 years; mean of 25.931 years; median of 27 years

What is the highest degree earned? (MA/MS; Spec./Dr.)

MA/MS, 26.7%; Specialist Degree, 18.1%; Doctorate, 55.2%)

Racial/Ethnic?

91.7% White, 6.9% Black, 0% Hispanic, 1.4% Asian-American, 0% Other or Combination

PERSONAL COMMENTS

Some of the superintendents made comments on the written survey. These are especially interesting because some superintendents objected to parts of the survey, saying that it was biased, contained comments on gender, etc. Of course, the researchers fully intended to discuss gender and ask questions related to some of the barriers and other factors which are mentioned in the literature. Here are the comments received from the female superintendents.

From Indiana:

- Women dress more in suits, etc. rather than a frilly dress because of other's perceptions of the role of superintendent. However, men may also prefer a more casual style, but are unable to do so because of the "superintendent" image.

- This was difficult to answer. Many (items on survey) were not so "black and white" for me. Item #59, "If you had it all to do again, would you seek the superintendency?" ...the job is touchy!!! The first year was awful. I will leave the superintendency for college teaching soon even though I'm very successful and have great Board evaluations and support.

- My answers to several of these questions would have been different 14 years ago. "Times are a changing."

- I have assumed the superintendency in a district of 5000 where I have been employed for 27 years -- 9 as principal, 18 as assistant superintendent under the same superintendent.

- My greatest "edge" was having outstanding mentors -- both male and female.

- I have never felt restricted in taking charge or being assertive I am my own person. I am feminine and do not make excuses for my gender. I can be as tough as needed and can problem solve with the best of them. I use my intellect to guide me and I place children first.

- I was hired as a superintendent the 2nd time I seriously applied for one --Becoming a superintendent evolved --It was never a conscious dedicated goal until shortly before I was hired. Also, I had trouble separating what I have read in the literature from my personal beliefs and experiences.

- I did not like this survey. I feel it made me as a female feel a sense of discrimination and I do not. I am a female and have the respect of my colleagues. Gender is not an issue for me.

- Item #27, "Female superintendents do not handle finance and facilities as well as male superintendents." ...do not have experience. The Indiana network of female

administrators has helped me. The "Lone" -- there is no one to confide in has been the hard part.

And, from Illinois:

- Define male characteristics! We are all individuals trying to accept a unique but rewarding challenge.
- Being a superintendent has more to do with having the skills necessary to become a superintendent than being male or female.

- My femininity does not have to be put on a back burner. I would encourage more women to seek the superintendency. I am having a great time. If I'd have known it was going to be so much fun, I'd have done it a long time ago.

- I disagree with thinking "male characteristics" -- they are leadership traits!

- Next time have a female superintendent review the questions. I found them biased toward chauvinism. Sorry!

- I had a difficult time with parts of this survey. Too many stereotyped statements.

- I have a concern that many of your questions were gender biased. A successful superintendent is evaluated on performance not gender. There is not one educational leadership trait that is right for all situations.

- These [four point Likert scales] are too polar for me – perhaps that says more about my female take on school leadership than your survey could elicit. I prefer a 5 point Likert!

- I just retired this year. I was more than ready. A new board and stress were key factors.

- Thank you! Good luck with your research! I'm pleased that you are exploring this area!

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